

## **MOHAVE COUNTY PORTION OF THE MOHAVE / LA PAZ LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA**

### **Geography**

Mohave County's fortunes have been linked to Clark County, Nevada, since the town of Laughlin began developing into a gambling casino center. In 1993, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget recognized the link from then just available detailed 1990 census data, and made Mohave County part of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Area (MA). Since Laughlin overtook Reno as Nevada's second largest gambling center (measured in dollars of income), Bullhead City, Laughlin's bedroom community across the Colorado River, has been showing significant growth.

### **Population**

According to the most recent official population figures, produced by the US Census Bureau, 2000 figures show 155,032 people reside in Mohave County. This resident population accounts for 3 percent of state of Arizona's total population. In the ten years since the 1990 census, Mohave County's population grew by 65.8 percent, or roughly 5.2 percent annually compared to the state as a whole which grew over 40 percent for the decade. Lake Havasu City is the largest in the county, with an estimated population of 41,938. Bullhead City is the next largest, with an estimated population of 33,769.

### **Income**

According to data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis from 1990 to 1999, local total personal income in Mohave County increased nearly 88.5 percent compared to the State's roughly 90 percent. However, on a per capita basis, the gain of 33.6 percent was close to 12.7 percent below the State's growth of 46.3 percent. Mohave County per capita income was \$20,199 in 1999, about 80.2 percent of the state average, down from 87.8 percent in 1990. Average earnings per job increased 3.3 percent in 1999 – slightly less than the gain for the state at 4.1 percent. Average earnings per job were \$23,948 in 1999 compared to \$31,307 for the state.

### **Labor Force**

The Mohave County labor force grew roughly 1.2 percent each year from 1995 to 2000. Mohave employment figures grew more, however, with an average annual increase of 1.7 percent. This affected the unemployment rate downward from 6.8 percent in 1995 to 4.2 percent in 2000. But, that's not the whole story for the area, because the job statistics are counted by place of work rather than place of residence. As a result, many of Mohave County resident's jobs are located

across the Colorado River, and are not part of Mohave County's job statistics. Unfortunately, Laughlin's job growth is buried in Clark County's statistics, which are dominated by Las Vegas—one of America's fastest growing metropolitan areas.

## **Employment**

Total nonfarm jobs in Mohave County grew on average nearly 5 percent yearly from 1995-2000. The largest growth occurred in Services, which had average yearly growth of 6.9 percent for the period. Services was also the second most dominant industry in 2000, employing over 11,500 workers (trade was first with 12,400 employees). Manufacturing and transportation, communications, and public utilities (TCPU) also registered impressive gains at 3.5 percent and 5.3 percent per year respectively. Two industries lost jobs over the five-year period. Mining and quarrying lost 7.5 percent and finance, insurance & real estate (FIRE) group lost employment at about 2.4 percent average annual pace from 1995 to 2000.

## **Growing and Declining**

For the year 2000, the largest industry job growth was experienced in civic and social associations (+267 jobs), nursing and personal care facilities (+230 jobs), and masonry, stonework and plastering (+199 jobs). The largest employment losses appeared in motor vehicles and equipment (-85 jobs), lumber and construction materials (-61 jobs) and real estate agents and managers (-61 jobs). For further details see the enclosed tables.

## **Forecast**

Research Administration is forecasting employment to grow 1.0 percent in PY 01-02 and another 2.6 percent in PY 02-03. Countywide unemployment is expected to decrease slightly from the PY 00-01 rate of 4.2 percent to 4.1 percent in PY 01-02 and afterwards to 4.0 percent in PY 02-03. Unemployment in the non-reservation areas is expected to descend gradually from the PY 00-01 rate of 4.0 percent to 3.9 percent in PY 01-02 and then to 3.8 percent in PY 02-03.

## **Issues of Concern**

- Mohave County's changing industry mix has been toward less diversification, and greater dependence on government and tourism.
- Mohave County income and pay has been lagging despite super growth.

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security, Research Administration, November 2001.